WORKERS HAMMER 4
SUPPLEMENT 13 DECEMBER 2025

After Your Party conference:

Whose party is it anyway?

No surprise, the mainstream media coverage of the Your Party founding conference in Liverpool was lazy and inaccurate. It focused almost entirely on the expected chaos and factional strife, without looking beneath the surface. For those of us who have a stake in the success of Your Party, the reality looks different. Your Party (which has absurdly become the official name) now exists. It has a constitution, a membership of over 50,000, with many eager to start campaigning. And the conference ended in a qualified victory for the left wing of the party.

The conference was tightly run by the clique around Jeremy Corbyn headed by ex-Labour advisor Karie Murphy, who was hoping to assert control over the apparatus (such as it is) and to crown Jeremy as sole leader. On the eve of the conference, they declared war on the left: leading members of the SWP were expelled, including one who spoke at Zarah Sultana's eve-of-conference rally. RCG activists were also physically thrown out of Corbyn's separate rally. The next day, councillors close to Sultana were barred from entering the hall, staffed by an army of security guards and stewards whose purpose was to remove any "disruptors". Throughout the day, conference delegates witnessed absurd scenes of members standing at the podium marked "this is Your Party", to then get interrupted and removed by the chair as soon as they said something which stepped outside the strict bounds set for discussion.

The conference organisers were hoping to swiftly crush the left. But it backfired. First, some votes did not go their way. The full ban on dual membership in other left-wing parties was defeated. Collective leadership won over single leadership, which Corbyn had openly backed. The words "socialism" and "working class" were kept in the political statement. These were setbacks for Corbyn and Murphy, although minor ones that they

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Produced by Spartacist Publications (TU)

could live with, since they had decided in advance on all the options to be voted on.

The real moral victory for the left came with Zarah Sultana's speech on Sunday, which electrified the room in a way Corbyn simply couldn't. Attacking the bureaucratic procedures of the conference, Sultana went on to denounce capitalism, Zionism and the monarchy, to resounding cheers and standing ovations. Corbyn even had to grudgingly clap for what was the only left-wing speech of the weekend that the chair could not interrupt. Some at the end even sang "Oh, Zarah Sultana!"—a chant long reserved exclusively for Corbyn.

The weekend showed that the party's base is to the left of its leaders. It demonstrated that Sultana's radical speeches are widely popular and that the left wing is clearly the most dynamic and forward-looking section of the party—a force the leading clique cannot fully control, despite their best efforts.

But any optimism for the left must be cautious. The right wing remains in firm control of the party and will no doubt seek to stack the Central Executive Committee with its people in elections coming up early next year. And, crucially, Your Party still has no programme. After the founding conference, no one knows what the party stands for other than the vague terms of the political statement.

Thus, nothing is resolved. Factionalism between Corbyn and Sultana will inevitably continue, and the party has no clear political answers to the complex problems confronting the country. There is clearly a space for the left to play a decisive role. But ***only*** if it understands the lines of battle, and if it is able to cohere around a clear political alternative.

Right and left wings

The conference showed what was already obvious to anyone looking beneath the surface: behind the factionalism at the top, there is a right wing and a left wing, battling, sometimes in the open, most often covertly.

The right wing is represented by Corbyn, as well as by independent MPs Shockat Adam and Ayoub Khan. It includes former trade union bureaucrat Len McCluskey, ex-Labour Party advisor Karie Murphy, ex-Labour councillors and old-timers as well as socially conservative Muslims, held together mainly by personal loyalty to Corbyn and revulsion for the far left. Their politics are a mixed bag of liberal appeals, moral righteousness, pacifism and fealty to "international law". This is best captured in Corbyn's speeches, full of vague declarations against poverty and war, but always carefully crafted not to offend anyone. The party they have in mind is a left-wing but moderate and respectable option; a sort of voice of the conscience of good people.

The leader of the left wing is Zarah Sultana, who, since October at least, has made a sharp turn to the left. Pushed out of any leading responsibilities in Your Party by the Corbyn clique, she has increasingly relied on the most radical sections of the party: socialist and communist groups, trans liberation activists, some trade unionists and, in general, the radical youth. To her credit, Sultana is alone among leading figures to have put forward a clear set of politics which directly challenges the ruling class: she is openly anti-NATO, anti-Zionist, anti-monarchy, for trans liberation and for the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy—even attacking the Greens from the left. Unevenly and not without problems (more on this below), she has repeatedly made the case for a radical, socialist and working-class party.

For authentic socialists, there is no doubt that a side must be taken here. The wishy-washy liberal party proposed by the Corbyn wing has no future in this era of deep polarisation. Sultana's vision, on the other hand, despite its shortcomings, is a step towards differentiating socialists from liberals and has greater potential to tap into the deep anger simmering among workers and youth. It is essential that socialists defend Sultana against the right wing and, in the coming leadership elections, fight to put her and those who support her views into leading positions. However, as always, this is easier said than done.

"If only we could unite!"

For most members of Your Party, the current divisions are not so clear. Many like what Sultana is saying, but don't see it as counterposed to Corbyn's views. Most wish for both sides to just stop the infighting and unite so that we can finally "get on with it". Since a lot of the infighting has been waged in an underground manner, through power moves and smear campaigns rather than openly and with clear politics, it is hard to blame them.

But the main source of confusion on this comes from the left wing, ***not*** the right. It is the left wing—Sultana herself first and foremost—which constantly entertains the illusion that a reconciliation with the Corbyn side is possible. Sultana can present a radical vision for the party, but she is always careful ***not*** to present it as counterposed to that of Corbyn, as she adamantly repeats her willingness to work with Jeremy and the right wing, despite their never-ending guerrilla war against her and her supporters. National secretary of the SWP

Lewis Nielsen in his speech at a fringe event insisted on the need for Corbyn and Sultana to unite and lead the party together, even though the Corbyn wing expelled him on the eve of conference. Same thing with Counterfire, who are always ready to defend Corbyn's record despite at least one of their leading members being banned by Karie Murphy from entering the conference hall.

The right wing has no political vision to speak of, nor any significant base of support. This is why they resort to bureaucratic methods, smears and bans on socialist groups. So, it falls on the left wing to clearly explain the ***political source*** of the conflict, to lay out to members that ***two irreconcilable visions*** of the party are battling, and then make the case as to why the left wing represents the way forward. However, this obviously requires openly attacking the politics of the Corbyn wing—something Sultana, the SWP and her allies staunchly refuse to do.

Sparts at Your Party conference Workers Hammer

They might think that taking the fight to Corbyn would just be seen as adding to the disastrous infighting. In fact, it is the absence of an open political debate over what Your Party should fight for that is wrecking it. The infighting cannot simply be wished away. Either it is brought into the open, or else it continues underground. Sultana and the left's calls for reconciliation, for co-leadership with Corbyn, and their refusal to politically expose the right only adds confusion and fuels cynicism.

Others would argue that the party needs Corbyn, who, despite his problems, remains a pillar of our movement and its most well-known figure. Sure, but activists must realise that contrary to 2015, Corbyn is not driving the movement forward any more, but is in fact holding it back. Many are already realising this. The left's refusal to make this clear only obstructs this process and allows space for the Corbyn clique to continue its guerrilla campaign.

It is perfectly possible to take the fight to Corbyn intelligently and productively. The point isn't to throw him out. Rather, it is to make the case to members as to why the party should openly stand against NATO, Zionism, the monarchy, and for working-class power, forcing the Corbyn wing to take a position on those key issues. If they agree, excellent! If not, then it will be clear who stands as an obstacle to building a radical, socialist party. Let the right wing break the unity. A struggle based on clear socialist politics, rejecting backroom manoeuvres and personal insults, will solidify, not weaken the party.

Thus, socialists, while supporting Sultana against the right, must wage a battle ***within*** the left wing against this "non-aggression pact" with the right. It isn't enough to simply denounce the witch hunts and advocate party democracy. Those who are merely looking to co-exist with the right wing are repeating the same mistake the left made in the Labour Party for a century. Our goal must be for Sultana's politics to ***dominate*** the party, ie become its policies. It is when the left wing stops fuelling illusions in Corbyn and the right wing that it can start winning over the party's "middle ground" to its views.

The problem with Sultana and the left wing

But there is a deeper and broader problem confronting Your Party that the left wing must urgently address: its isolation from the working class.

Everyone on the left always talks about the working class, and always thinks they are the working class. But the truth is that the actual working class is turning not to the left, but to the right—to Farage and Tommy Robinson. Your Party remains overwhelmingly based in the middle class. Just ask yourself: how many manual workers were present at the Your Party conference? Not many…. This separation between the left and the working class is the biggest problem confronting the socialist movement, one which is ignored or denied by virtually all socialists.

The central reason behind this is that over recent decades, and particularly since Tony Blair, the socialist movement has embraced liberal politics. For many workers, there isn't a difference between a socialist and a liberal, because on the most important issues, they have merged. From Brexit to immigration, from identity politics to lockdowns, socialists have almost entirely embraced liberal positions, thus contributing to pushing workers to the right wing, which presents itself as the only force opposing the liberal status quo (see "Ditch the liberals—win the workers!" *Workers Hammer* no 256, Autumn 2025).

Zarah Sultana comes from the left wing of Labour, whose politics are simply left liberalism sprinkled with socialist rhetoric. Although she has moved to the left and is now arguing positions incompatible with liberal poli-

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tics, she is doing so not as a result of a conscious political break from liberalism to socialism, but as a result of external pressures, ie the need to lean on the left wing of Your Party, and to distinguish herself from the liberal Greens. Surely, this is a good development, and why socialists should support her.

However, this means that Sultana's politics are a sort of hybrid between socialism and radical liberalism, packaged in the form of slogans to galvanise the left wing of Your Party. We have to be honest: it is at times incoherent and superficial, often far removed from where the working class is at, while at the same time she still clings to liberal positions that repel workers.

For example, Sultana is right to oppose NATO, Zionism and the monarchy. However, for many workers, it is far from clear why those positions matter at all for their living conditions. On the other hand, Sultana's comment that "there is no room for socially conservative views" in Your Party was a classic example of liberal identity politics, which further deepened the divide between trans people and Muslims rather than bridging it (see our leaflet "Sultana's disastrous comment", 12 September).

On immigration, surely the most polarising question in Britain, while Sultana correctly denounces the racist scapegoating of migrants, she does not go beyond SUTR's slogan "refugees are welcome here". This slogan is a liberal and moralist position on immigration, not a socialist one. Rather than peeling working people away from the far right, it pushes them further into their arms (see "How NOT to fight the right", *Workers Hammer* no 256, Autumn 2025).

The point is that even if Sultana were to win the leadership of the party, with her positions becoming part of its programme, this hybrid of socialism and liberalism would still prevent it from winning over the working class. So, what should socialists do about this?

The task is to build a revolutionary tendency in Your Party which can fight for a full break from liberal politics and develop a clear socialist programme. This is key not only to fighting the right wing, but to giving the left wing a political coherence and developing a programme which can actually connect with the working class. We do not mean just another grouping shouting radical slogans. We mean a tendency, bringing together different groups, that can develop serious answers to the hard problems that the far left has so far totally failed to resolve. How to unite Muslims and trans people? How to unite foreign- and native-born workers and address immigration in a Marxist manner? How to win back workers from Reform? How to connect the fight for jobs and conditions with the fight against imperialism?

In many ways, Sultana's political problems are the same as those of the entire far left: correct slogans but far removed from working-class conditions, mixed in with liberal positions that the working class hates. This is the recipe that has discredited the left among workers, and breaking from it should be the main task of a revolutionary nucleus in Your Party.

We have put forward a draft programme for such a tendency (see our leaflet, "Let's build a revolutionary caucus in Your Party", 24 September). We wrote it not as a final product, but as a starting point for debate and discussion. So, we call on all socialists to get in touch with us so that we can start the work of building a Marxist wing in Your Party! ■

SPARTACIST

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Supplement
13 November 2025
The World at a Turning Point
President Trump (top right). Jakarta, Indonesia, August 25: Cops mobilize against protest demanding dissolution of parliament in front of the House of Representatives building (center). U.S. aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford which has now been deployed to Caribbean as part of U.S. military threats against Venezuela (bottom).
Brendan Smialowski/AFP; Yasuyoshi Chiba/AFP; U.S. Strategic Command
Where is the world going? Are we witnessing "a worldwide chain of mass movements, insurrections, uprisings and revolutions," as the Revolutionary Communist International (RCI) claims? Or is "the Land of Lincoln...being transformed by
as Marxists, we cannot just jump
or look at the latest opinion polls.
inner dynamics of world events and
currents from secondary countercu

Our most recent take on the world situation

SPARTACIST
Supplement
8 October 2025
Palestine
Kill the Deal!
Palestinians flee northern Gaza Strip after intensified Israeli bombardment, September 16. Inset: Netanyahu and Trump bond at White House, September 29.
Brandon/AP
Habboub/Abaca
The genocide in Gaza must stop. But only fools can expect Trump and Netanyahu to bring peace to the Middle East. The plan they unveiled on September 29 demands total capitulation by the Palestinian resistance and offers only further colonial subjugation. Although it is easy for any pro-Palestine observer to see how this deal is obscene and would be a disaster, answering what should be done is much more difficult. The Palestinian resistance finds itself in a corner. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is only getting worse, there is no way to defeat Israel militarily. And there is a strong sentiment that this conflict must end. Moreover, the diplomatic pressure is extremely intense, with the whole world lining up behind Trump.
It may appear on the surface that making major concessions, such as releasing the hostages, accepting a technocratic government and disarming, will bring an end to the suffering. But the truth is that it will only give Israel a free hand to exterminate the Palestinians. Just look at what happened in 1982, when the armed Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) fighters acceded to withdrawing from Lebanon. This opened the road for the Sabra and Shatila massacres, marginalized the PLO and paved the way for the Oslo Accords. To retreat
Sabra and Shatila Must Not Be Repeated!

Palestine–how to stop the genocide?